GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3490
ANSWERED ON:17.08.2005
VIOLATION OF TRAI DIRECTIONS BY CELLULAR OPERATORS
Jagannath Dr. M.

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Telephone Regulatory Authority of India has directed all the cellular operators not to charge any value-added service from its subscribers;

(b) if so, whether the Government is aware that cellular operators especially Airtel continues to charge value-added services more than the normal published tariffs in violation of TRAI directions; and

(c) if so, the action taken or proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD)

(a) to (c) No, Sir. Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has not directed Cellular Operators not to charge for Value Added Service like Quiz, Ringtones, Tele-voting etc.. Tariff for Value Added Services are under forbearance. To protect the interest of those customers who avail value added services without any knowledge of the charges for these services, TRAI, vide `Direction on Premium Rate Service` dated 3rd May, 2005, had directed all the Cellular Mobile Service Providers and Unified Access Providers to publish in all communications/advertisements relating to premium rate services, the pulse rate/tariff for the service. TRAI also has issued a directive dated 3rd May, 2005 that no chargeable Value Added Service, which was earlier being provided free of charge shall be made chargeable without the explicit consent of the customer. In this regard, TRAI had received complaints, one from a subscriber of M/s Bharti Cellular Ltd. (Airtel) in Mumbai and another from a subscriber of M/s BPL Communication Ltd. from Mumbai regarding provision of Value Added Services without the explicit consent of the consumer, in violation of the TRAI Direction. TRAI has sought explanation of the service providers on these complaints.